United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in resolution last night, establishes Commission of Inquiry to investigate attacks on UNOSOM II personnel; suspends arrest actions against individuals possibly implicated, but not currently detained pursuant to resolution 837 (1993), pending Commission report.

+ Security Council asks Secretary-General to continue using good offices through Special Representative to Burundi and to consider sending small United Nations team to help efforts of Government and OAU to restore democracy.

+ International Tribunal on war crimes in former Yugoslavia holds opening meeting in the Hague; Secretary-General's Representative says Tribunal will bring those guilty of war crimes to justice, deter new outrages and help bring peace to region.

+ Special Commission on disarmament of Iraq concludes first stage of investigation into allegations of chemical weapons use in south of country; to send inspection team to area of alleged attack.

+ Secretary-General extends mandate of Special Envoy for Tajikistan by five months to 31 March 1994; says concerted effort is needed to persuade Government and opposition groups to start serious peace talks.

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The Security Council last night authorized the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to investigate armed attacks on the personnel of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) that had led to casualties among them. In unanimously adopting resolution 885 (1993), the Council asked the Secretary-General to appoint the Commission at the earliest possible time and to report on its establishment. Pending completion of a report by the Commission, the Council also asked him to suspend arrest actions against those

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individuals who might be implicated, but were not currently detained pursuant to resolution 837 (1993), and to make appropriate provisions to deal with those already detained.

The Council urged the Secretary-General to provide the Commission with all necessary assistance, and asked the Commission to report its findings through him as soon as possible. Stressing that the people of Somalia bear ultimate responsibility for the achievement of national reconciliation and the protection of United Nations personnel, the Council called on all parties in Somalia to cooperate fully with the Commission.

In resolution 837 (1993), the Council condemned the unprovoked attack of 5 June 1993 against personnel of UNOSOM II and authorized the Secretary-General to take measures against those responsible. In that attack, 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed and 56 were wounded in the southern sector of Mogadishu, an area dominated by the Somali National Alliance (SNA) led by General Mohamed Farah Aidid.

Special Representative Jonathan Howe today welcomed the resolution, and expressed the hope that it would facilitate resumption of meaningful dialogue between UNOSOM II and the SNA.

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The Security Council last night encouraged the Secretary-General to continue using his good offices through his Special Representative to Burundi and to consider dispatching a small United Nations fact-finding team to facilitate the efforts of the Burundi Government and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In a statement read out by President José Luis Jesus (Cape Verde), the Council also asked the Secretary-General to make recommendations for establishing a voluntary fund to assist the dispatch of an OAU mission as announced by the OAU Secretary-General.

The Council reiterated its condemnation of the abrupt and violent interruption of the democratic process in Burundi and demanded an immediate end to the violence there. It expressed alarm at the grave humanitarian situation which had resulted in the movement of over 700,000 refugees to neighbouring countries and an increasing number of internally displaced persons. The Council appealed to all States, international agencies and other humanitarian organizations to provide prompt humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in Burundi and neighbouring countries.

The Council also welcomed the OAU efforts to assist the Burundi Government in restoring democratic institutions, rebuilding confidence and stabilizing the situation. It also commended the Prime Minister of Burundi and other Government members for their courage and their spirit of reconciliation. The Council noted with satisfaction the dispatch of a Special Envoy on a good offices mission to facilitate the return of constitutional rule to Burundi and welcomed the appointment of Maxime Zollner as the

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Secretary-General's Special Representative for the country. It asked the Secretary-General to keep it informed of the situation and the progress of the mission.

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The International Tribunal set up to prosecute serious violations of international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia held its opening meeting in the Hague, Netherlands, today. The Tribunal, which was established by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, has the power to prosecute persons alleged to have committed or ordered the commission of grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, violations of the laws or customs of war, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide.

Today's meeting was declared open by the Secretary-General's Representative, Carl-August Fleischhauer, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel. Each of the eleven judges of the International Tribunal made a solemn declaration and the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands made a welcoming statement on behalf of his Government. Also present at the meeting was the Prosecutor-designate of the Tribunal, Ramon Escovar Salom, Attorney General of Venezuela.

Mr. Fleischhauer said in his statement that few Security Council decisions in recent years had created such expectations as the establishment of the Tribunal. Through the United Nations, the international community had reaffirmed its determination not to allow mass killings, so-called "ethnic cleansing", the systematic rape of women and other crimes to continue unabated, and to hold those responsible accountable before the law of nations.

In establishing the Tribunal, he continued, the Security Council had three important aims: to end the crimes being committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia; to bring to justice the persons responsible for them; and to break the seemingly endless cycle of ethnic violence and retribution by providing for prosecution and judgement under the rule of law and thereby contributing to the restoration of peace. Hopefully it would also help end the long nightmare of human suffering in the former Yugoslavia, he said.

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The Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq today said it was concluding the first stage of its investigation into allegations of chemical weapons use in southern Iraq. In the second stage, an inspection team will be sent to Iraq to conduct a thorough inspection of the area of the alleged attack.

The main objective of the first stage, a fact-finding mission, was to find the precise location where the alleged attack had taken place. The Commission said that precise coordinates were now available, and that it would not comment on its investigation until the inspection had been concluded and the results analysed.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to extend the mandate of his Special Envoy for Tajikistan, Ismat Kittani, for five months until 31 March 1994. In a report to the Security Council dated 14 November, he said developments in Tajikistan and the region gave grounds both for hope for a political solution to the conflict there and for serious concern about the risk of further deterioration of the situation. Concerted efforts were needed to overcome the remaining difficulties and to persuade the Government of Tajikistan and all major opposition groups to start a serious process of negotiation without further delay.

The Secretary-General said he would be ready to respond positively to any reasonable request by the parties and to recommend to the Security Council an appropriate international monitoring mechanism to help implement possible agreements concluded by them.

He noted that the Government of Tajikistan had asked him to establish a United Nations integrated office in Dushanbe, to advise and assist in developing the country's economic and social infrastructure and to coordinate international humanitarian efforts. It had also asked for advisory services regarding human rights and democratic institutions. Pending a decision by the General Assembly on the question of interim offices, he proposed that the small team of United Nations officials now in the country continue to perform its functions until the integrated office was established.

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